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ABSTRACT

Summarized is a report by Jane Burnette titled "Adapting Instructional Materials for Mainstreamed Students," which describes federally sponsored projects to develop publishable supplements and adaptations of popular textbooks for use with mainstreamed handicapped students. The modifications were made to elementary curricula in science and social studies and to secondary school curricula in science, social studies, and mathematics. The eight-step process used by the projects in curriculum adaptation is outlined. The projects created a number of imaginative products to adapt the texts, including computer-based aids and instructional media such as audiocassettes, prereading organizers, framed outlines, study guides, and worksheets. These projects demonstrated that it is possible to develop materials based on widely-used textbooks that: (1) meet student and teacher needs, and (2) produce learning results for mainstreamed students comparable to those produced by the original text for the general student population. (JDD)

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RESEARCH & RESOURCES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

ABSTRACT IX
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ADAPTING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR MAINSTREAMED STUDENTS

With the advent of mainstreaming, many teachers discovered that commercially available materials were not designed for classes of students with a wide range of abilities and learning styles. Although many teachers modified instructional materials themselves, the Office of Special Education Programs in the U.S. Department of Education wanted to promote the commercial availability of materials that would meet the needs of mainstreamed students without singling them out from the regular class.

Adapting Instructional Materials for Mainstreamed Students is a report of the procedures used by U.S. Department of Education-sponsored projects to develop publishable supplements and adaptations of popular textbooks. The modifications were made to elementary curricula in science and social studies and to secondary school curricula in science, social studies, and mathematics. Many of the techniques used in these projects are feasible for use by teachers with school district support.

METHOD

The projects all followed eight steps to curriculum adaptation:

1. Assess learner needs to develop a learner characteristics profile.
2. Determine the instructional needs of teachers who will be using the materials.
3. Analyze the text and compare the needs of the learners and teachers with those already addressed by the text; those needs not addressed are the areas requiring modification.
4. Determine the specific modifications to be made.
5. Develop goals and objectives for the adaptations in keeping with the original goals and objectives of the text.
6. Develop a plan for formative evaluation.
7. Select and train teachers to participate in the formative evaluation.
8. Produce a prototype to be evaluated; evaluate and revise; then prepare the materials in final form.

The projects' individual approaches to each of these steps are discussed in the report, and examples are provided. An appendix describes each of the projects and its adapted materials.

RESULTS

The projects created a number of imaginative products to adapt texts to the needs of handicapped learners in regular classrooms. The Office of Special Education Programs' requirement that the materials be designed for handicapped students to use without being singled out resulted in materials that benefit all students in the regular class, including high performing students, nonhandicapped students with learning problems, and mainstreamed handicapped students. Highlights among the projects include the following:

- The first microcomputer-based adaptation of an elementary science curriculum for students with mild learning disabilities (including teacher materials, lesson plans, software, and hardware).
- Audio cassettes depicting the life of the common man in different times and historical situations accompanied by a world history data base and a computerized management system for student data.

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The Council for Exceptional Children operates the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children under a contract with the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

- A resource book providing models, examples and reproducible masters of adapted curricular materials, and a computerized procedure that compares individual students' learning characteristics and their teachers' styles and provides a list of appropriate instructional techniques and supplementary aids for each mainstreamed student.
- Courseware providing a supplemental arithmetic curriculum via microcomputer that can be used with a number of popular textbooks.

Many of these instructional systems included computer-based aids, and they also utilized other types of instructional media and supplementary aids, such as audio cassettes, prereading organizers, framed outlines, study guides, and worksheets.

IMPLICATIONS

These projects demonstrated that it is possible to develop materials based on widely-used textbooks that: (a) meet student and teacher needs, and (b) produce learning results for mainstreamed students comparable to those produced by the original text for the general student population. Since these materials can be used by entire classes of students, they alleviate problems associated with the market for special education materials, which publishers have traditionally considered "thin." A further benefit of the projects is that many of the procedures and techniques they used to adapt materials are feasible for use by school districts or teacher teams with school district support.

Adapting Instructional Materials for Mainstreamed Students. 1987. 22 pp. Jane Burnette, ERIC/SEP Special Project on Interagency Information Dissemination. Available free of charge, while supplies last, from the ERIC/SEP Special Project, The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091. Also available for $.78 (microfiche) or $1.85 (hard copy), plus postage, from ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 3900 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304 (1-800-227-3742). Order EC Number 192 800.

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